

Project Proposal

Proposal Title: Cedar Creek Winter Range Enhancement

Proposal Number: 818

DWR Region: Southern Region

Lead Agency: USFS

County: Wayne

Project Manager: Kent Chappell

PM Phone: 4358656113

Regional Priority: Within Focus Area

Project Type: Terrestrial Habitat

Proposed Start Date: 7/1/2008

Project Location: West side of the Thousand Lake Mountain along the foothills above the communities of Lyman and Fremont in Wayne County, Utah.

Project Description: Improve approximately 4298 acres of big game winter range by mechanical thinning, burning and seeding pinyon/juniper woodlands.

Description of Problem/Need: The purpose of this project is to promote desired vegetative conditions that would improve critical elk and deer winter range, reduce the risk of fire damage to the habitat, and establish and maintain conditions where the intensity of possible future wildland fires and its associated risk to the habitat would be reduced.

As a result of aggressive fire suppression over the last 100 years, these areas which were historically more open shrubsteppe communities have been converted to pinyon/juniper stands. In an attempt to restore healthy habitat conditions, the USFS is implementing the Cedar Creek Wildlife Project. Big game habitat has been affected through this vegetation trend by reducing available forage quality, quantities, and the availability of forage for wildlife. This area is critical winter range for mule deer and elk herds on the limited entry Plateau Thousand Lake Deer Unit and the Plateau Fishlake/ Thousand Lake Elk Unit.

With the reduction of habitat deer and elk are utilizing the adjacent private agriculture resources. The increasing amount of property damage and loss of agriculture feed has prompted local land owners to seek methods or treatments that would help reduce the number of deer and elk on private land. Because trophy elk are the primary problem depredation is not feasible. This project is aimed to mitigate this problem by improving winter range on adjacent public lands.

Objectives:

Goals:

1. Enhance Big Game and small fauna winter range forage and habitat areas.
2. Reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfires in the area by opening the continuous pinyon/juniper fuels across the area.

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1. Reducing the Pinyon/Juniper cover to <15% and increase desirable and palatable shrub, forb, and grass cover to 20% over 10 years.
2. Restore vegetation to condition class I, a historically fire adapted shrub steppe ecosystem.

Relevance to Strategic Plans:

This project is consistent with the Utah Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy in working to improve sagebrush-steppe and mountain brush habitats, two key habitats identified in the plan.

This plan is consistent with the Fishlake National Forest Plan for wildlife habitat enhancement and fuels management. This project is part of a larger effort by the Forest to improve habitat, reduce fuel loading, and protect against catastrophic wildfire. Other projects planned or completed on the Thousand Lake/Boulder Mt. include the Lyman Bench, North Slope and Boulder Foot Hills. The North Slope project was also funded by the UPCD in 2006. Further, this project is in line with the UDWR mule deer management plans to improve shrub-dominated winter range (UDWR Mule Deer Plan pg. 4 IIA. It will directly help achieve the habitat objective #2 of improving winter range quality on 200,000 acres.

Potential Risks:

Continual PJ encroachment has resulted in dominance of sites and diminishing of understory species as well as increasing the risk for large scale wildfire resulting in losses of key components of the ecosystem.

Proposed Methods:

Treatments include thinning all age classes of pinyon/juniper trees using chainsaws and/or brush saw machines (bobcats). Treatment will also include spring or fall broadcast burning in selected areas to reduce fuel loads as well where fire will spread under prescribed conditions. Areas that do not have the desired shrub, forb or grass understory will be seeded with a nurse crop seed mix. The thinning and prescribed fire treatments will be designed primarily to mimic a mosaic pattern on the landscape. Patches of trees should be left to create a mosaic look. Broadcast burning will be implemented using a variety of hand ignitions sources. These sources include, but are not limited to: Fusee's, drip torches. Ignition patterns will be managed to achieve a low to moderate severity burn.

Shapefile Name: S:/DWR/HPD-2010/GIS Shape Files/818.shp

Seed Source: GBRC

UPCD Reg Team Coord Date: 1/16/2008

Proposed NEPA Action:

Proposed Arch Action:

Monday, March 16, 2009 1:12:27 PM

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☒ **Vegetation Monitoring** ☐ **Wildlife Monitoring**

Monitoring Information: Monitoring work is already established and being evaluated. Photo points are in place and pre-treatment photos have been taken. Post-treatment photos will be taken and analyzed to determine if project objectives are met in 1, 3, 5, and 10 year photos

Grazing Management:

SPECIES BENEFITING

Mule Deer	Rio Grande Wild Turkey	Elk	Greater Sage-grouse
Bobcat	Black-tailed Jackrabbit	Sage Thrasher	Brewer's Sparrow
Small Mammals	Neotropical Birds		

LAND OWNERSHIP

Owner	Acres
USFS	4298
Total	4298

PROPOSED FUNDING

Source	Amount Requested	Date Approved	Amount Approved
Unfunded Balance	\$237,523.00		\$0.00
USFS	\$53,500.00		\$53,500.00
Totals	\$291,023.00		\$53,500.00

PROPOSED BUDGET

Item	Description	DWR Account	Partner Contrib.
Seed (GBRC)	Seed for 350 acres @ 27.20/acre	\$9,523.00	\$0.00
Contractual Services	Mechanical Thinning of 2850 acres @ \$80/acre	\$228,000.00	\$0.00
NEPA	USFS NEPA NFMA	\$0.00	\$48,000.00
Personal Services	USFS Labor and Monitoring	\$0.00	\$4,500.00
Other	USFS Miscellaneous project needs	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
	Totals	\$237,523.00	\$53,500.00

Project Map:

